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NEWS

Winchester News celebrating first birthday

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

May 2, 2024 . 4:57 PM — 2 min read

Winchester News Board of Directors President Tara Hughes, center, and Advisory Board member Shukong Ou greet residents at Town Day. WINCHESTER NEWS FILE PHOTO

A year ago today, on May 3, Winchester News began publishing. Several residents have wondered about our backstory, so here it is.

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In 2022, Winchester Town Meeting created a communications study committee whose task was to advise the town on how to communicate with residents, given the sad decline of the Winchester Star. When the committee work was done and a report sent to Town Meeting, committee member Betsy Wall and your reporter read a Boston Globe article about independent newspapers started in Marblehead, and decided to set up our own paper.

Several members of the committee agreed to join us, although two had to resign, Jennifer Haefeli because she no longer had the time, and Wall because she took a job with the Commonwealth — separation of politicians from news sources is a vitally important part of a free press.

But Casey Bauer, Tara Hughes and Shukong Ou stayed, and we were off and running. Tara is an attorney and got us incorporated, we appointed a board of directors and an advisory board. Tara even resigned from Town Meeting in order to be separate from government.

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Winchester News Board member Joyce Westner speaks to residents at the Farmers Market. WINCHESTER NEWS FILE PHOTO

We were lucky enough to have offers to help from Emily Costello, who's a full-time journalist employed at The Conversation, which readers might want to subscribe to (it's free), and also from Peter Casey, the retired WBZ-radio news director (also a handyman!).

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We recruited Alison Swallow as our treasurer and we joined the Institute of Non-profit News (INN), which is our fiscal sponsor until we get our 501(c)(3). Meanwhile, we've grown our subscriber base, thank you, and we now have over 1,600, plus nearly 250 donors who've enabled us to hire part-time news editor Nell Escobar Coakley, a 30-year veteran journalist. We also hired two freelancers, Will Dowd and Chris Stevens.

Our first article was brief with little formatting and was about Spring Town Meeting and it wasn't until June that we started publishing editions with multiple stories and also with photos. Shukong is our technical expert and he replaced our original format on Google sites with a much more robust platform.

And we've been lucky enough to have residents write articles for us, including Reed Pugh about gardening, Rachel Whitehouse about environmental news, Ron Latanision about the Jenks science and technology talks, and Charlene Band who wrote about the young man selling his hand-made fish lures at Fells Hardware and Cameron Hopkinson, a student writer from Winchester High School.

If you'd like to wish Winchester News a happy birthday, please consider supporting us with a monthly donation. We're hoping to hire our editor full time.

Winchester News is a non-profit organization supported by our community. If you appreciate having local Winchester news, please donate to support our work, and subscribe to our weekly newsletter.

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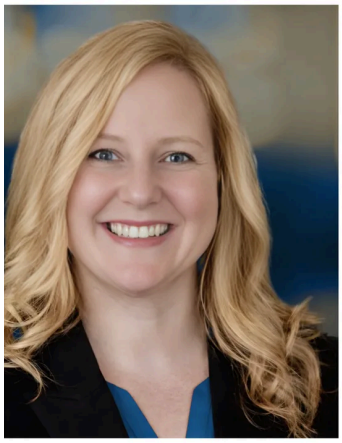

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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March 4, 2026

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses

NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for rente

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis

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as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

March 3, 2026

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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